

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 12-26 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicant cancels Claim 11, amends Claims 12, 13, and 15-21, and adds Claims 22-26.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that Claims 17 and 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for allegedly being indefinite. Applicant has amended Claim 21 to correct the informality noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Taniguchi (EP 1 005 153). Claim 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taniguchi. Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taniguchi in view of Ikada (U.S. 6,369,672). Claims 16, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taniguchi in view of Ohashi et al. (U.S. 6,937,113).

Applicant has amended allowable Claim 17 to be in independent form including all of the features of Claim 11 and Claim 16, and has amended allowable Claim 20 to be in independent form including all of the features of Claim 11. In addition, Applicant has amended Claims 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 21 to depend upon Claim 17 and added Claims 22-26 which correspond to Claims 12-15 and 21 and depend upon Claim 20.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the prior art rejections listed above are moot.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 17 and 20 are allowable. Claims 12-16, 18, 19, and 21-26 depend upon Claims 17 and 20, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that Claims 17 and 20 are allowable.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

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